Springfield Township High School

**Graduation Project Annotated Bibliography**

**Student Name:**

**Annotation #**

**MLA Citation:**

Type properly formatted citation here.

**INFORMATION:**

Author’s credentials:

Eli Lehrer is a reporter for *The Examiner* and *Insight on the News.* Lehrer’s topics include budget issues involving Congress, as well as other examinations of internal policy. Lehrer has also written columns analyzing the effectiveness and reliability of Amtrak and other US rail services. Lehrer is not a fan of Amtrak and often criticizes the institution for being outdated and slow to adapt.

Scope and purpose of the work:

The purpose of the work is a mix of overview and persuasive writing. Lehrer gives an overview of current mass transit situations existing throughout the United States. He also provides an overview of what 21st century mass transit systems could look like through comparison to European models. Lehrer also attempts to persuade the reader into seeing what he views as the flaws of American mass transit.

Intended Audience:

The intended audience of this article is lay people who may not be familiar with American mass transit systems. The article does a good job at explaining different things by making them easy to understand, and by providing real life examples. These examples are helpful because they support Lehrer’s points and make his argument stronger.

**SUMMARY**

Thesis or main idea:

The best solutions for mass transit in congested urban centers may be busses and light rail. The construction of new highways is prohibitively expensive, and adding more busses is therefore a cheap alternative. Light rail can also be expensive, however, as people need to be bussed to the rail stations.” (Lehrer 1)

Summary of main arguments:

Lehrer’s main arguments revolve around the point that roadways, both urban and interstate, are expensive to build and maintain. He argues that the best way to avoid these costs is through investments in busses and light rail systems. If cities adapt to these technologies, he argues, they will be able to reduce the number of people driving private cars. This will help reduce emissions, save money, and allow people to get to their destinations faster.

**EVIDENCE**

Summary of evidence:

* Money is wasted on parking lot space
  + “”For less than the interest payments on the bonds to build the additional parking structure, however, Maplewood began running the free jitney service.” (Lehrer 1)
* “Dense cities that can support heavy-rail or subway systems already have them. As a result, the debate about mass transit lies not in building more subways but rather in the wisdom of newer light-rail systems” (Lehrer 1)
* \*\*”Roberta Gratz, ‘There is now magic to the idea of transit. It all depends on picking the right system and running it in the right way.’” (Lehrer 1)
* Statistics
  + “In 1947, slightly less than half of all workers took a bus or train to work; today, only about 5 percent do.” (Lehrer 1)
* Mass transit requires subsidies
  + But the subsidies could be less than those required to maintain road systems
* Bus rapid transit
  + “Bus rapid transit generally allows buses to change streetlights to green as they approach, makes significant station improvements, adds dedicated bus lanes and guide ways and equips buses with high-tech fare equipment such as that found in subway systems.” (Lehrer 2)
* Rail might not be the best answer to transportation crisis
  + “Richmond argues that even when rail systems seem to have low per-rider cost, they achieve it by replacing popular bus lies that already have even lower costs. Getting people to the rail systems requires inefficient feeder lines that, he argues, increase the overall cost of transit.” (Lehrer 2)
* Race/Class issues
  + “’The people who ride the rails are definitely a great deal whiter than the people who ride buses’” (Lehrer 3)
* Benefits of light-rail systems
  + Sometimes you pay as much as rapid-bus transit

**EVALUATION**

Evaluation of research:

Lehrer presents a very good article here. The content is well researched, as shown by his numerous quotes and bountiful examples. Lehrer’s article is well thought out as it moves from topic to topic in a planned way. By first discussing the benefits of a good mass transit system Lehrer is able to make some really strong points. Then he addresses the negative aspects, but then answers the criticisms with well thought out rebuttals. This clear style allows for easy comprehension that makes the information easily accessible.

 Evaluation of scope:

Each topic addressed in Lehrer’s paper is adequately addressed. He delves into all topics surrounding mass transit systems. This large scope of information is not as deep as it could be, but it does a fine job at explaining things. The one place that Lehrer could explain more was the different transit means used by different classes. I thought that this was an interesting topic that could be looked into further, and I would have like to have seen it developed more.

Evaluation of author bias:

Lehrer is pretty biased towards adopting better mass transit systems to replace American cities congested roads. He feels that mass transit is a better alternative to private car use, and that the money that would be saved is immense. Lehrer’s bias is also revealed through his proposals for change, and the way he thinks America could be improved.

**REFLECTION:**

I think that this source will be very useful for my project. I think that Lehrer brought up a lot of good points about the importance of having the right system in order for a mass transit system to work. I liked the idea of rapid-bus transport so I think I will look into that topic further. This will help my project because I can compare it to regional rail and see which would be the solution that does the best. I can look at speed, reliability, cost on the taxpayer, and cost to the rider. These things will be important to look at for whichever mass transit system I look at. Lehrer’s points about different classes and races using different types of transportation were also very thought provoking. This could be something I might have to look at, so it is good to know that information on the topic exists. The article cites Los Angeles as an example of this, so I will have to look further in to Philadelphian history and if a similar trend took place at anytime.